

Republican policies promote equal opportunity. We know that eliminating discrimination is a moral imperative, but it does not alone guarantee the equal opportunity we all believe in.

So Republican attorneys general not only enforce anti-discrimination laws, Republican state legislators fight to improve our schools, empower parents and give children in poor neighborhoods a quality education that enables them to get into college or qualify for a good paying job.

The quality of a child's school should not be decided by the zip code in which she lives, and state legislators like the ones in this room are the ones who consistently stand up for those children against entrenched education establishments.

Another issue that's being resolved in the states is a very sensitive one, and it's being worked out in a more respectful way than it would be at the Federal level. I'm talking, of course, of same sex marriage.

As with, I'm sure, many of you, I have friends and family who are gay. And according to the tenets of my Faith, I accept them for who they are and love them. But the tenets of my Faith also hold that marriage is between one man and one woman. Indeed, in the Catholic Church, marriage is one of seven holy sacraments.

You see, for me, this is not a matter of opinion, or even really a choice. But I understand that what is a sacred rite to tens of millions of Americans is also in our civil law the means by which couples garner survivorship benefits, hospital visitation rights, insurance coverage and other benefits. So while I don't support same sex marriage, I do not begrudge its advocates their position on the issue.

And, I don't believe that everyone who supports same sex marriage is anti-Catholic, or a religious bigot. But in the same vein, it would be nice if so many of them would stop accusing everyone who doesn't share their views of being anti-gay or homophobic. Freedom of Religion is still in the very first Amendment to the Constitution.

We may not all agree on whether we should redefine what constitutes marriage, but hopefully we can agree not to redefine what constitutes tolerance.

So on the state level, and in particular in states with Republican leadership, we're seeing the benefits of respectful dialogue, problem solving policies and fiscal responsibility. Republicans are balancing budgets, reducing tax burdens, improving schools and making families safer and better off.

I know you're all familiar with our Future Majority Project at the RSLC, where we are recruiting hundreds of candidates for state legislatures who more fully reflect the growing diversity of our nation. So in addition to a positive message, we'll have fresh-faced messengers as well.

The RSLC's sole purpose is to help elect Republicans. Doing that means getting a majority of votes in thousands of different districts, and dozens of states.

We understand that Republican legislators here in Hawaii will not pass legislation identical to those in Texas or Ohio or North Carolina; and that attorneys general in North Dakota, Georgia, or Idaho won't have the same list of priorities.

But their shared beliefs, principles and values take each of their states in a much better direction than their Democratic opponents would.

Republicans don't seek to win elections to gain power, but to translate our principles into policies that make our country stronger and make lives better for our fellow citizens. And that means winning majorities in legislative chambers, electing governors and other statewide officeholders, and—ulti-

mately—winning a majority of the Electoral College again.

If Republicans can have unified state government where a majority of Americans live, we can win back the White House. But to do so, we'll have to learn valuable lessons at the national level, and those lessons are being taught at the state level.

The United States of America is a great nation, but we can see how President Obama's policies are making us weaker—here at home and in the world. The Republican Party is a great Party. But we have not won the national popular vote in five of the last six presidential elections.

For our country to be stronger, our party must be stronger.

And that begins with all of us.

#### RECOGNIZING NIH RESEARCH

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, today I wish to honor Dr. Tara Palmore and Dr. Julie Segre, 2013 Federal Employees of the Year, for their ground-breaking research to stop the spread of deadly hospital-acquired infections. Each year approximately 100,000 patients die from hospital-acquired infections. These deadly infections affect patients who are in the course of receiving healthcare treatment for other conditions; therefore, the patients often already have compromised immune systems. These two doctors created a revolutionary model to identify and halt the spread of infection for the rest of the health care industry to follow.

Over the course of a 12-month period in 2011 and 2012, a rare and deadly "superbug" was spreading from patient to patient at one of the Nation's premier research hospitals, the National Institutes of Health's Clinical Center. This two-woman team—Dr. Tara Palmore, a deputy hospital epidemiologist, and Dr. Julie Segre, a senior investigator—partnered with a talented team of doctors to accomplish an extraordinary achievement. For the first time ever, they were able to sequence the bacteria's DNA to decipher how the pathogen spread from patient to patient. This allowed doctors to detect the origins of the infections, trace the transmission, and implement measures to put an end to the outbreak.

Tragically, 18 seriously ill patients acquired the bacteria and seven ultimately died from the infection, but this use of genomics could profoundly change the way hospital-acquired infections are identified and halted, leading to quicker response times and saving tens of thousands of lives. Dr. Francis Collins, the Director of the NIH said,

"It is a groundbreaking advance in one hospital that will now have an impact across the world and will become the standard. It is a fantastic example of taking a challenging medical problem and applying technologies in a new way to come up with a remarkable result. We now have a new weapon in the battle to stop the spread of drug-resistant organisms."

Dr. John Gallin, the Director of the NIH's Clinical Center, said the breakthrough by the NIH team is "a magnificent demonstration of how a hos-

pital can contain these infections when they occur."

There are a limited number of antibiotics available to fight these types of highly resistant bacteria, so this new discovery provides a new approach for hospital infection control that will benefit numerous patients in the future. I congratulate Drs. Palmore and Segre for their hard work and critical contributions to the health care community and to all of their colleagues for the great work at the National Institutes of Health.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO ORTHEIA BARNES

• Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, on November 3, the many friends and admirers of Ortheia Barnes will gather in Detroit to pay tribute to her remarkable life and career. "Careers" would actually be more appropriate in Ortheia's case, because this extraordinary lifelong Detroiters has excelled in multiple fields.

Some Detroiters know Ortheia as an entertainer. They have heard her voice accompanying Motown legends and recording stars such as Aretha Franklin, heard her powerful renditions of gospel songs or watched her sing during the annual Thanksgiving parade downtown or they have seen her in stage productions or local television programs.

Other Detroiters know Ortheia from her civic involvement. She is active in a host of charitable endeavors, from the American Cancer Society to Focus: HOPE, to programs that help people recover from addiction.

Some may know Ortheia from her political activism. She has long been active in Michigan elections, from city council to Senate, and she is an energetic advocate for the idea that every American, regardless of race or creed or color, is welcome and needs to be active in the political process.

If you do not know Ortheia as an entertainer or supporter of worthy causes, you know her for her faith. She has ministered around the world, not only sharing her faith but doing the good works that are so fundamental to it.

I am fortunate to know Ortheia for all the gifts she has given our community and in one more way: My wife Barbara and I have known her as a longtime family friend. Her family and ours have been linked through three generations, beginning with Barbara's and Ortheia's mothers. Ortheia herself briefly babysat our kids while she was in high school. We know how proud Ortheia's warm and wise mom Belle was of her daughter back then and of her growing pride as the multigifted adult Ortheia emerged.

When Detroit gathers on November 3 to celebrate Ortheia's birthday, the dress will be sharp, the music will be proud, and the stories will be many. Whether we know Ortheia from the